

Public Comment to the California Ocean Protection Council
Interim Funding, Project Selection, and Application Guidelines

Date	Name	Affiliation	Topic of Communication
06-19-2005	John Foster	California Department of Parks and Recreation	Interim Funding, Project Selection, and Application Guidelines
06-20-2005	Jim Marshall		Interim Funding, Project Selection, and Application Guidelines

-----Original Message-----

From: John Foster [<mailto:jfost@parks.ca.gov>]

Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2005 7:39 AM

To: tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov

Subject: OPC Guidelines

Dear Sir,

The ocean resources OPC is charged with protecting include the cultural heritage sites of California. Therefore, these should be referenced in the Guidelines. I'd request the following bullet be added:

- * Improve management and understanding of cultural heritage sites and shipwrecks in the ocean environment

Thank you for considering this important objective.

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-----Original Message-----

From: Jim Marshall [<mailto:jmarsh@silcom.com>]
Sent: Monday, June 20, 2005 6:36 AM
To: tcorrigan@scc.ca.gov
Cc: sschuchat@scc.ca.gov; COPCpublic
Subject: OPC Guidelines

Mr. Corrigan

The infusion of funds to be directed to ocean protection is heartening. I am able to supply some perspective from one whose "boots are on the ground".

I was a commercial abalone diver for 27 years and continue to dive in the Sea Urchin Fishery which began in 1972. As such, I have spent my whole adult life diving on the coast of California and at the offshore Islands. I have participated in "stakeholder" opportunities for these fisheries since 1984. This experience in and on the ocean and in the meeting room, I feel, gives me a unique perspective that is missing in this latest attempt of the OPC to reinvent the wheel of ocean/fisheries management.

I will restrict my comments to what I know best, which is fisheries management. Many of these ideas I will outline apply to other ocean related issues but I will leave that to others.

The most basic problem we have concerning fisheries management is lack of information concerning the fish and the fishermen. This ignorance is the result of a lack of long-term monitoring programs to watch what is going on in the ocean and with those who spend their time on and under it. This ignorance is compounded by the well meaning efforts of the legislature and other bodies who have failed to fund such monitoring programs.

The Abalone Fishery should be considered as a "poster child"; an example of what is wrong with fisheries management in California. The fishery was closed in 1997 after 20 years of neglect. A monitoring program begun in 1974 was not funded and nothing was done until 1994 when a disease of abalone, Withering Syndrome, became epidemic. At that time efforts to determine the extent of the effects of the disease began. This effort continued on a sporadic basis until 1999. The Department of Fish and Game has been unable to sustain monitoring of the abalone resource due lack of funding. DFG resources since that time have been directed creating the Abalone Recovery and Management Plan.

This plan was completed this month and is slated for approval by the Fish and Game Commission next month. It took 8 years. Little or no monitoring has occurred that might tell us what the effects of the closure achieved. Such bungling has contravened the Marine Life Management Act (MLMA) which mandated "adaptive management". MLMA defines adaptive management as, "90.1. "Adaptive management," in regard to a marine fishery, means a scientific policy that seeks to improve management of biological resources, particularly in areas of scientific uncertainty, by viewing program actions as tools for learning. Actions shall be designed so that even if they fail, they will provide useful information for future actions. Monitoring and

evaluation shall be emphasized so that the interaction of different elements within the system can be better understood."

The fact is, with the abalone fishery, nothing can be done now as nothing has been learned. Adaptive management has not been practiced and we know little more now than we did 8 years ago when the fishery was closed. A similar situation exists for most fisheries in CA and until monitoring programs are initiated for our fisheries and fishermen and we enhance our understanding of those changes we will continue to react to such changes with "knee jerks."

The recent placement of Marine Protected Areas around the Channel Islands is following the same pattern. I have attended several "stakeholder" meetings concerning the establishment of monitoring programs for the reserves but, with the exception of the National Park Service (NPS), no government funding of monitoring programs (long-term or otherwise) is forthcoming. The irony is that the NPS has no regulatory authority in the state waters that surround the Channel Islands National Park and the agency that does have that responsibility and is mandated to regulate it is not yet engaged in "adaptive management."

Lastly I would like to comment on the repeated claim in your press releases that California is a "world leader" in ocean protection. If we were such a leader we would have programs in place to address the problems that have been re-identified by the OPC. In the realm of invertebrate management, California was recently described (in Proceedings of the North American Symposium on Invertebrate Fisheries and Management) as having "third world" management programs. Ironically, Mexico and Chile, countries that are often described by our citizens as "third world", were lauded for their progressive management of invertebrates.

I suggest that your funding priorities should be directed to long-term monitoring of our ocean resources and anthropomorphic effects thereon so that we can "adaptively" manage those resources.

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